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# How the West Was Won: Why the University of Missouri should be in the SEC West

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**How the West Was Won: Why the University of Missouri should be in the SEC West**

**by**

**Brandon Thomas Vernon**

**Advisor: Kathy Fogel**

**An Honors Thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Bachelor of  
Science in Business Administration in Finance and Supply Chain Management**

**Sam M. Walton College of Business  
University of Arkansas  
Fayetteville, Arkansas**

**December 3, 2012**

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**Abstract:**

This paper will outline the author's reasoning behind why he believes the University of Missouri should be incorporated in the Southeastern Conference's West division, as opposed to the East division. The author begins by giving a brief history detailing why the University of Missouri was pressed into making a decision to leave their current conference, the Big 12, and look for new membership. This will then parlay into a discussion of the decision for Missouri's new conference to place them into the East division, a mistake in the author's opinion. The original decision to place Missouri in the SEC East was made to appease the tenured members of the conference, and ensure that both scheduling and rivalries were kept in place. However, the author will suggest that cost savings from transportation, division realignment, and reassurance of maintained rivalries will justify that the University of Missouri will be better served in the SEC West division. In order to begin an investigation of transportation costs for the two universities involved in the proposed switch, the author conducted interviews with six different individuals to create an estimate for the cost of transportation. The interviewees included: Colleen Lamond, the Associate Athletic Director of Game Operations at the University of Missouri, Shelly Garcia, Group Charter Manager of Sun Country Airlines, Lisa Lee, the Administrative Support Assistant in charge of flight charters for Auburn University's football program, Coach Randall Dickey, Director of Operations of Auburn Basketball, Reid Oslin, Director of Sales for Private Jet Group, and General Manager of Sales & Compliance at Adventure Bus Charter & Tours Inc, Pat Dodd. The Author then concludes with the notion that this is a time in which college football programs and conferences in the south have the potential to garner more recognition nationwide than the universities they represent. Therefore, they still must recognize that at its core, it is a business, and earning a profit to benefit your university still remains king.

**Introduction:**

When you walk on the campus of a Southeastern Conference University, there is no doubt that you are in football country. From the 80,000 plus capacity stadiums, to the multi-million dollar workout and practice facilities, you will find a unique mixture of pretentiousness, pride, and passion. We live in a time where the most profitable program in the Southeastern Conference (University of Georgia) earns \$70,838,539 in revenue and \$52,529,885 in profit. [\(Dosh\)](#) The average revenue and profit earned by a program in the Southeastern Conference in 2011 was \$49,900,780.92 and \$29,946,728.42 respectively. These robust numbers make it the wealthiest conference in the nation. The conference itself will distribute right around \$241,500,000 to the twelve institutions in the revenue sharing plan for the 2011-12 fiscal year, a record for the NCAA as well as the conference. There is no doubt that the Southeastern Conference, or SEC, is an exclusive club. There is also no doubt as to why most programs around the country covet the membership. So, when the time came for both Texas A&M University and the University of Missouri to jump ship from another one of the nation's most recognizable football conferences, the Big 12, they were ecstatic to receive and invite to the SEC.

The conference grew from twelve to fourteen members, and an even split needed to be made between the conference's divisions. Following their acceptance, A&M was promptly placed in the SEC West consisting of the University of Alabama, University of Arkansas, Auburn University, Louisiana State University, Mississippi State University, and the University of Mississippi. Soon after the placement of A&M, Missouri was placed in the SEC East. The East consisted of the University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky, University of South Carolina, University of Tennessee, and Vanderbilt University. In an attempt to keep the integrity of one of the SEC's most significant rivalries together and schedules intact, it seemed logical to split the two newly added teams. However, was this decision the correct one? In a conference so financially driven, it is puzzling as to why a decision was made on an intangible basis. With the reduction in transportation costs, switching the University of Auburn and the University of Missouri from their respective divisions, and the reassurance of rivalries, I will propose why the University of Missouri will be better served in the SEC West.

### **Missouri's Jump to the SEC:**

Anyone passionately connected to college football in the summer of 2011 remembers the near collapse of traditional conferences as we once knew. It all began in 2009 when the Big 10 Conference announced that it would be adding one or more teams to its membership. A domino effect ensued. Soon after the Big 10's declaration, the Pacific 10 Conference, or PAC 10, confirmed that they were also interested in expansion. Not to be left out, after the PAC 10's announcement, the Big East Conference made an announcement of their own about their intention of collecting two more football schools. What was the main cause of these new expansion strategies? Television deals. The SEC and ACC, Atlantic Coast Conference, both had recently signed lucrative TV deals. The SEC had just signed a fifteen year deal worth roughly more than \$2 billion in 2008. ([ESPN](#)) Additionally, the ACC agreed to a twelve-year \$1.86 billion contract with ESPN in 2010. ([ESPN](#)) Conferences were looking to strike it rich by building what college football fans have now come to know as "Super Conferences" in an attempt to gain enormous reach to the various major television markets. These "Super Conferences" would consist of four, sixteen team conferences that would be constructed to create blockbuster TV deals, as well as position themselves for the inevitable switch from the current Bowl Championship Series system, or BCS, to a college football playoff. This left the Big 12 in precarious position. With three of the six major conferences from the Football Bowl Subdivision, or FBS, looking towards expansion, the Big 12 realized that the expansion teams would have to come from somewhere. In the summer of 2011 both Colorado University and the University of Nebraska defected from the Big 12 to the PAC 10 and Big 10 respectively. This left enormous uncertainty amongst the remaining Big 12 teams.

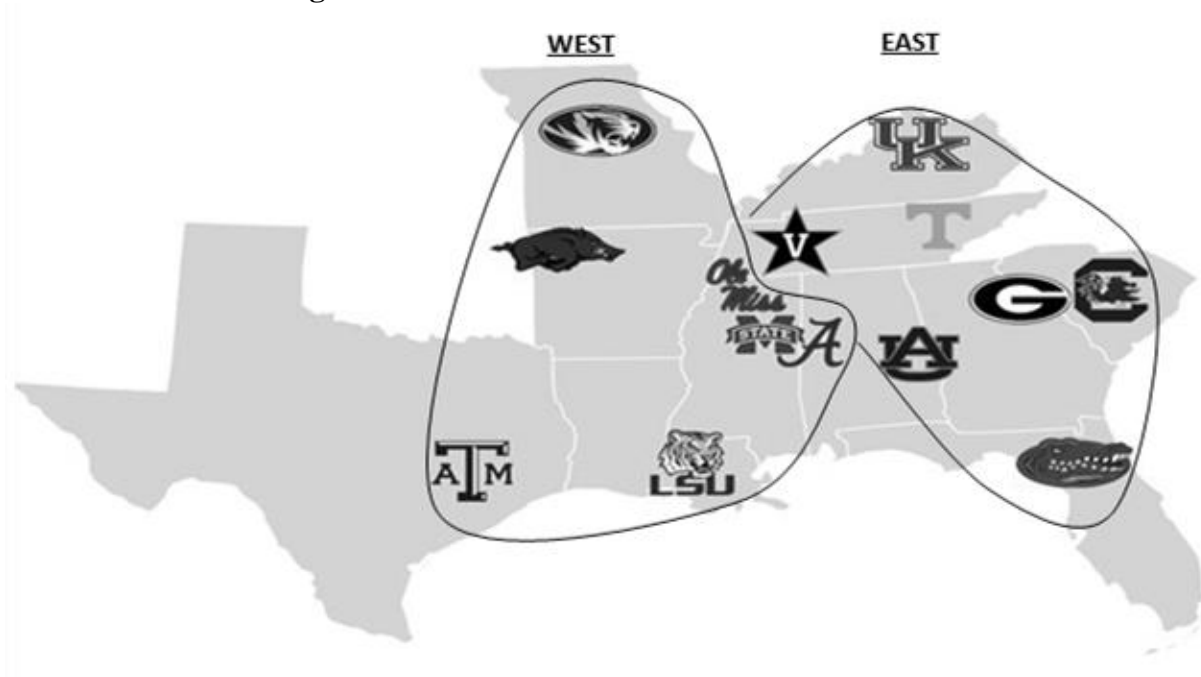
Anyone who has ever made a future career decision in an uncertain economy can relate to the University of Missouri in 2011. Their current membership in the Big 12 was unstable to say the least, but they had other problems. According to an interview with Associated Press, Chancellor Brady Deaton noted that state funding in Missouri has not been able to keep up with inflation. So much so, that the funding for colleges and universities were below the level budgeted in 2001. ([ESPN](#)) The Missouri Board of Curators, a group in charge of overseeing the four-campus system including the flagship Columbia site, was making a push for the athletic program to be self-sufficient financially. Therefore, the potential for a complete collapse of the Big 12 conference altogether and financial instability of Missouri state funding forced the University of Missouri to look for more stable financial footing.

In all of the mess, the University of Missouri found sanctuary in the SEC. The SEC had considered expansion in an attempt to position themselves to be one of the super conferences, and with the recent addition of Texas A&M, they were ready to add another to keep the membership number even. After an offer was extended to Missouri, their tenure in the Big 12 was all but over. According to a confidential document obtained by the Associated Press, in the SEC, Missouri Athletic Department would earn \$17.16 million in Big 12 TV money in fiscal year 2012, compared to a projected \$19.25 million from the SEC deal. (ESPN) Missouri would also benefit from the aforementioned record setting revenue sharing of \$241.5 million. Finally, and most importantly, Missouri would benefit from the on field success of the SEC, which would range in the millions from bowl game revenue. For example, in 2010 season the SEC had 8 teams in bowl games. Furthermore, the SEC has had a member in the National Championship game the previous six years. A simple linear relationship exists between bowl prestige and earned revenue. The higher prestigious the bowl carries; the higher revenue gained. It benefits in to be a strong college football conference because the revenue gained from the bowls are divvied up amongst all of the members of the conference. However, Missouri did see a downside to leaving the Big 12. By breaking their current contract with the Big 12, Missouri was subject to a hefty exit fee. The fee, according to Bloomberg Businessweek, will amount to \$12.4 million of withheld revenue by the Big 12. ([Matuszewski](#)) Although, it would only be a onetime penalty, and the Missouri football administration was confident that in the long run, the decision was a very good one.

### **Why is Missouri in the East Division?**

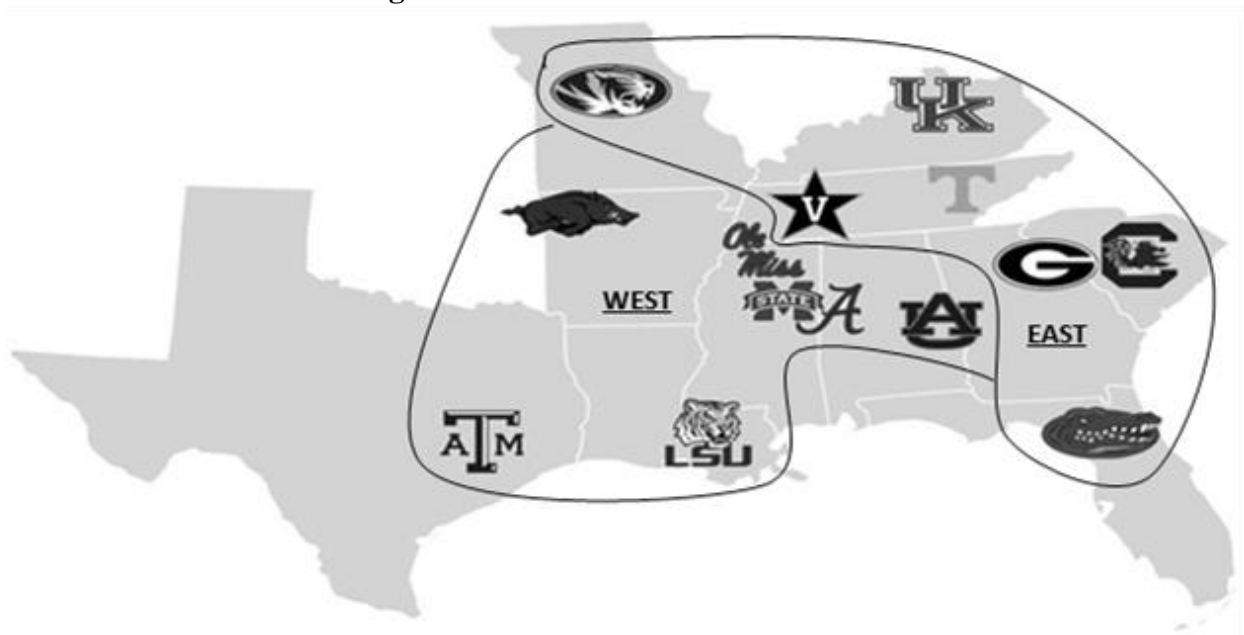
Speculation over what was to be done over the divisional alignments sparked a lot of conversation, and for good reason. The plan on where to place Texas A&M was never in question. According to [googlemaps.com](#), College Station, home of the Aggies, is located 364 miles west of the closest neighboring SEC school, LSU. (GoogleMaps) So, it comes as no surprise that A&M was SEC West bound. After that, the decision became a little more complicated. A decision needed to be made in regards to where to place the University of Missouri. Speculators debated over the two most likely outcomes. The first of which would call for Missouri to reside in the SEC West. This made since to some because Missouri was the 3<sup>rd</sup> western most SEC school, despite also being located the furthest north. With the addition of another West division school, the divisions would become lopsided 8-6 in favor of the West, so who would move? The mostly highly speculated school was Auburn University. The university was the eastern most school in the West division, and seemed like the logical choice. The new conference alignment would look as follows:

**Figure 1: Missouri in the West Auburn in the East**



The other most likely outcome was that the University of Missouri would simply be placed in the East Division to balance the new addition of Texas A&M to the West. Each new team would be placed in separate divisions in an attempt to keep from disrupting the status quo in the conference already. The second proposal would look like this below:

**Figure 2: Missouri to the East Division**



Aesthetically, from a geographical standpoint, the first proposition seems to be a no brainer. So, why did the SEC decide to move ahead to the second scenario? The number one reason driving the decision behind putting Missouri in the East was to maintain the annual rivalry between Auburn University and the University of Alabama otherwise known as the Iron Bowl.

The Iron bowl is a rivalry spanning back to February 2, 1893.([Rolltide.com](http://Rolltide.com)) The rivalry gained its name due to the enormous iron production of Birmingham. The teams have met 77 times, and Alabama has the slight edge in the series with 42 wins 34 losses and one tie. The game now takes place on the last game of the season during what most college football fans call rivalry week. In the last 3 years either Alabama or Auburn has participated in the BCS National Championship game (winning all three), and Alabama is poised to head to another in the 2012 season after winning the SEC Championship and being ranked number two in the country. Hence, it is understandable that this game carries weight with college football fans across the nation. To move Missouri to the West and possibly lose this game would be devastating to a 119 year-old tradition; a decision that SEC Commissioner Mike Slive was unwilling to make.

However, as previously discussed, college football is a business. Whether the strategy is to increase profit is through increased revenue or decreased spending, the bottom line will always be to bring as much wealth to your respective university as possible. So what if I told you that there were cost savings to be made through the transportation costs from both Auburn University and the University of Missouri to justify a switch moving Missouri to the SEC West division, Auburn to the East, and in the meantime keeping the Iron Bowl Rivalry intact?

#### **Compiling Costs information for Missouri and Auburn:**

Athletic programs spend small fortunes on travel costs throughout the year. For example, the University of Missouri's Athletic department spent \$4 million dollars in travel expenses in their final year in the Big 12, and forecast for an additional \$750,000 with the move to the SEC. ([Durando](#)) Travel for teams will include things such as: hotels, food, and most importantly transportation. However, hotel and food fees are highly regulated by the SEC right down to the location of the hotel, to portion and nutrition expectations. So, the biggest area for cost savings relies on the most unregulated portion of travel expenses, transportation.

According to a phone interview, conducted on November 30<sup>th</sup>, with Colleen Lamond, the Associate Athletic Director of Game Operations at the University of Missouri, one of the few NCAA suggestions regarding travel is to follow the "7 hour rule". The "7 hour rule" recommends that if a chartered bus can make it to the venue in around 7 hours, the team should not use air flight. After a same day interview with Lisa Lee, the Administrative Support Assistant in charge of flight charters for Auburn University's football program, it was confirmed that both schools follow the recommended guidelines.

After the two interviews, the logical next step was to begin to compile research to outline transportation costs for both the University of Missouri. On November 30<sup>th</sup> an interview was conducted with the Associate Athletic Director of Game Operations at the University of Missouri. Missouri's football program uses Sun Country Airlines, an airline company that specializes in large charter flights. From there an interview was conducted with Group Charter Manager of Sun Country Airlines, Shelly Garcia, to go over the costs involved in chartering an airplane. Although, the precise cost information was unobtainable for the University of Missouri's travel, due to proprietary confidentiality, Shelly was able to explain the typical cost involved with contracting with a football team.



The key factors that were learned from the conversation was that given the quantity of the student athletes and travel staff, roughly 150-160 for both Auburn and Missouri. They would need to use a 737 aircraft; this is the cheapest of the larger aircrafts. An interesting detail regarding the flight size was that even if the group grew to 170, the aircraft could accommodate the number by adding more seats and decreasing leg room. She also revealed that athletic programs typically pay for both on-board catering and ramp side operations. The ramp side operations are typically used for high profile personnel that are being picked up by car or bus and do not wish to bother going through a typical terminal. The costs per person for catering cost, \$14.00 a head, and the ramp side operation was an additional \$1,500. On average, accounting for the fluctuation in fuel costs, the cost per hour in the air was \$9,000. Additionally, because the planes resided in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to get to the Columbia Airport (COU) was an additional 2 hours and 40 minutes. This ferry cost would be added to the total time in the air. Finally, at the culmination of the interview with Shelly, she was able to produce estimates on all round trip total flight costs from Columbia, Missouri to every school in the SEC.

After a short interview, on November 30<sup>th</sup>, with Coach Randall Dickey, Director of Operations of Auburn Basketball, he was able to explain that Auburn bids out their flight chartering for all sports. The current provider for Auburn had to back out of their obligation due to a loss of transportation capacity, but Coach Dickey did say that in the past Private Jet Group has been contracted. On November 30<sup>th</sup>, an interview was conducted with Reid Oslin, Director of Sales for Private Jet Group, and was able to have a similar conversation about estimates for sports programs chartering flights. He also suggested the use of a 737 aircrafts, and said that they are currently charging a \$4.00 per gallon fuel charge and a two hour ferry fee to Auburn. Therefore, with everything included, a school like Auburn would be looking at an average of \$14,000.00 per flight.

Even if either team chose to fly, they would still have to use bus transportation to get to and from the stadium. After talking to both Lisa and Colleen it was very clear that the cost bus transportation was relatively static across the industry, the main fluctuation was caused by fuel cost. Costs of bus charters, in terms of what a football program needs for away game travel, is either a flat rate or a cost per mile. The customer would incur the higher of the two. A unique aspect of sports travel is that the program is required to pay for the hotel fee of the driver, even if the driver is only taking them to and from an airport. A typical charter bus will hold 56 members. This means both Auburn and Missouri will need four busses to appease their entire travel group. On November 29<sup>th</sup>, an interview was conducted with General Manager of Sales & Compliance at Adventure Bus Charter & Tours Inc, Pat Dodd. He stated that a typical flat rate would be priced at \$1,050.00, and a per mile rate could average out at \$3.85 per mile rate.

Since both schools follow the "7 hour rule", an away game that would take significantly longer than seven hours to drive was scheduled as a flight. For the Missouri flights, the estimates from Shelly were already created, but for Auburn the fastest flight durations were found online between the airports and multiplied by \$14,000.00. Google maps was used to calculate the amount of bus mileage per away game trip. For example, the addresses of Faurot Field (Missouri's football stadium) or Jordan-Hare Stadium (Auburn's football stadium) was inserted as the point of origin. COU: Columbia Regional Airport (Missouri) or ATL: Atlanta International Airport (Auburn) was inserted as the destination. The distance was recorded via Google Maps and repeated the steps for the away team airport and stadium, and finally the distances were summed and multiplied by four. What was discovered, was that none of the Airports were far

enough away from the stadiums to enact the per mile costs. Therefore, a flat rate for bus charters was assumed for every flight.

If the “7 Hour rule” was in effect, the calculation was simple. Google Maps was used, once again, to find the distance between stadiums. Then the distance was multiplied by two to find the round trip total. The round trip total was multiplied by four to calculate the total in-transit mileage by all busses, and finally the total distance was multiplied by \$3.85. There was also a fixed cost for the hotel of 8 drivers that was averaged at \$250 a person; meaning, an additional \$2,000 to the final amount

After all of the information was gathered, the next step was to begin analysis of the total costs of transportation for both Auburn and Missouri.

### **Analysis of Transportation: Missouri & Auburn**

To make things easier, the schedule was condensed down to only SEC games. The out of conference games are irrelevant in my proposal to move Missouri to the West and Auburn to the East because both universities can choose those games. However, they cannot choose their division opponents. Each SEC team has eight conference games. Six of the eight aforementioned games are divisional, and they are split three and three home and away. The two remaining games are inter-divisional, and they are also split home and away. To get the best understanding of the cost savings for both teams, detailed list was compiled outlining the cost of the transportation for the following:

**Figure 3: Missouri 2012 season in the East**

EAST	University of Missouri (Last Season)							
	Conference Games	Home/Away	Flight/Drive	Flight Costs	Drive: Round Trip (+ Hotel)	Bus Miles Driven	Drive: Per Mile Cost (+ Hotel)	Totals
	Georgia	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	South Carolina	Away	Flight	\$ 62,500.00	\$ 10,400.00	-	\$ -	\$ 72,900.00
	Vanderbilt	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Alabama	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Kentucky	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Florida	Away	Flight	\$ 66,000.00	\$ 10,400.00	-	\$ -	\$ 76,400.00
	Tennessee	Away	Flight	\$ 55,500.00	\$ 10,400.00	-	\$ -	\$ 65,900.00
	Texas A&M	Away	Flight	\$ 58,400.00	\$ 10,400.00	-	\$ -	\$ 68,800.00
Totals			\$242,400.00	\$ 41,600.00	-	\$ -	\$284,000.00	

**Figure 4: Season if Missouri had Auburn’s schedule**

WEST	University of Missouri (Auburn Schedule)							
	Conference Games	Home/Away	Flight/Drive	Flight Costs	Drive: Round Trip (+ Hotel)	Bus Miles Driven	Drive: Per Mile Cost (+ Hotel)	Totals
	Miss State	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	4,528.0	\$ 18,632.80	\$ 18,632.80
	LSU	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Arkansas	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Ole Miss	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	3,816.0	\$ 15,891.60	\$ 15,891.60
	Vanderbelt	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	3,144.0	\$ 13,304.40	\$ 13,304.40
	Texas A&M	Home	N/A	\$ -	o	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Georgia	Home	N/A	\$ -	o	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Alabama	Away	Flight	\$ 55,500.00	\$ 10,400.00	-	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 65,900.00
	Totals		\$ 55,500.00	\$ 41,600.00	11,488.0	\$ 49,028.80	\$ 113,728.80	

**Figure 5: Auburn 2012 season**

WEST	Auburn University (Last Season)							
	Conference Games	Home/Away	Flight/Drive	Flight Costs	Drive: Round Trip (+ Hotel)	Bus Miles Driven	Drive: Per Mile Cost (+ Hotel)	Totals
	Miss State	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	1,936.0	\$ 8,653.60	\$ 10,400.00
	LSU	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Arkansas	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Ole Miss	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	2,352.0	\$ 10,255.20	\$ 10,400.00
	Vanderbelt	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	2,776.0	\$ 11,887.60	\$ 11,887.60
	Texas A&M	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Georgia	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Alabama	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	1,272.0	\$ 6,097.20	\$ 10,400.00
	<b>Totals</b>			\$ -	\$ 41,600.00	8,336.0	\$ 36,893.60	\$ 43,087.60

**Figure 6: 2012 Season if Auburn had Missouri's schedule**

EAST	Auburn University (Missouri's Season)							
	Conference Games	Home/Away	Flight/Drive	Flight Costs	Drive: Round Trip (+ Hotel)	Bus Miles Driven	Drive: Per Mile Cost (+ Hotel)	Totals
	Georgia	Home	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	1,432.0	\$ 6,713.20	\$ 10,400.00
	South Carolina	Away	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Vanderbilt	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Alabama	Home	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	1,264.0	\$ 6,066.40	\$ 10,400.00
	Kentucky	Home	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	3,872.0	\$ 16,107.20	\$ 16,107.20
	Florida	Away	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Tennessee	Away	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Texas A&M	Away	Flight	\$ 58,380.00	\$ 10,400.00	-	\$ -	\$ 68,780.00
	<b>Totals</b>			\$ 58,380.00	\$ 41,600.00	6,568.0	\$ 28,886.80	\$ 105,687.20

**Figure 7: Best case scenario for Missouri in the West**

WEST	University of Missouri (Best Case)							
	Conference Games	Home/Away	Flight/Drive	Flight Costs	Drive: Round Trip (+ Hotel)	Bus Miles Driven	Drive: Per Mile Cost (+ Hotel)	Totals
	Alabama	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	A&M	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Arkansas	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	2,496.0	\$ 10,809.60	\$ 10,809.60
	Vanderbilt	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	3,144.0	\$ 13,304.40	\$ 13,304.40
	Ole Miss	away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	3,816.0	\$ 15,891.60	\$ 15,891.60
	South Carolina	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Mississippi State	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	4,528.0	\$ 18,632.80	\$ 18,632.80
	LSU	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	<b>Totals</b>			\$ -	\$ 41,600.00	13,984.0	\$ 58,638.40	\$ 58,638.40

**Figure 8: Best case scenario for Missouri in the East**

EAST	University of Missouri (Best Case)							
	Conference Games	Home/Away	Flight/Drive	Flight Costs	Drive: Round Trip (+ Hotel)	Bus Miles Driven	Drive: Per Mile Cost (+ Hotel)	Totals
	Georgia	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	South Carolina	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Vanderbilt	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	3,144.0	\$ 13,304.40	\$ 13,304.40
	Arkansas	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	2,496.0	\$ 10,809.60	\$ 10,809.60
	Kentucky	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	3,680.0	\$ 15,368.00	\$ 15,368.00
	Florida	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Tennessee	Away	Flight	\$ 55,550.00	\$ 10,400.00	-	\$ -	\$ 65,950.00
	LSU	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	<b>Totals</b>			\$ 55,550.00	\$ 41,600.00	9,320.0	\$ 39,482.00	\$ 105,432.00

**Figure 9: Best case scenario for Auburn in the East**

EAST	Auburn University (Best Case)							
	Conference Games	Home/Away	Flight/Drive	Flight Costs	Drive: Round Trip (+ Hotel)	Bus Miles Driven	Drive: Per Mile Cost (+ Hotel)	Totals
	Georgia	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	1,376.0	\$ 6,497.60	\$ 10,400.00
	South Carolina	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	1,728.0	\$ 7,852.80	\$ 10,400.00
	Tennessee	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	1,736.0	\$ 7,883.60	\$ 10,400.00
	Kentucky	Home	N/A	\$ -	-	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Vanderbilt	Home	N/A	\$ -	-	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Florida	Home	N/A	\$ -	-	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Mississippi State	Home	N/A	\$ -	-	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Alabama	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	1,272.0	\$ 6,097.20	\$ 10,400.00
	<b>Totals</b>			\$ -	\$ 41,600.00	6,112.0	\$ 28,331.20	\$ 41,600.00

**Figure 10: Best case scenario for Auburn in the West**

WEST	Auburn University (Best Case)							
	Conference Games	Home/Away	Flight/Drive	Flight Costs	Drive: Round Trip (+ Hotel)	Bus Miles Driven	Drive: Per Mile Cost (+ Hotel)	Totals
	Miss State	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	1,936.0	\$ 8,653.60	\$ 10,400.00
	LSU	Home	N/A	\$ -	-	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Arkansas	Home	N/A	\$ -	-	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Ole Miss	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	2,352.0	\$ 10,255.20	\$ 10,400.00
	Vanderbelt	Home	N/A	\$ -	-	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Texas A&M	Home	N/A	\$ -	-	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Georgia	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	-	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00
	Alabama	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	1,272.0	\$ 6,097.20	\$ 10,400.00
	<b>Totals</b>			\$ -	\$ 41,600.00	5,560.0	\$ 25,006.00	\$ 41,600.00

**Figure 11: Worst case scenario for Missouri in the West**

WEST	University of Missouri (Worst Case)							
	Conference Games	Home/Away	Flight/Drive	Flight Costs	Drive: Round Trip (+ Hotel)	Bus Miles Driven	Drive: Per Mile Cost (+ Hotel)	Totals
	Alabama	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	A&M	Away	Flight	\$ 58,400.00	\$ 10,400.00	-	\$ -	\$ 68,800.00
	Arkansas	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Florida	Away	Flight	\$ 66,000.00	\$ 10,400.00	-	\$ -	\$ 76,400.00
	Ole Miss	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	South Carolina	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Mississippi State	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	4,448.0	\$ 18,324.80	\$ 18,324.80
	LSU	Away	Flight	\$ 59,900.00	\$ 10,400.00	-	\$ -	\$ 70,300.00
	<b>Totals</b>			\$ 184,300.00	\$ 41,600.00	4,448.0	\$ 18,324.80	\$ 233,824.80

**Figure 12: Worst case scenario for Missouri in the East**

EAST	University of Missouri (Worst Case)							
	Conference Games	Home/Away	Flight/Drive	Flight Costs	Drive: Round Trip (+ Hotel)	Bus Miles Driven	Drive: Per Mile Cost (+ Hotel)	Totals
	Vanderbilt	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Kentucky	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	Georgia	Away	Flight	\$ 60,750.00	\$ 10,400.00	-	\$ -	\$ 71,150.00
	Arkansas	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	South Carolina	Away	Flight	\$ 62,500.00	\$ 10,400.00	-	\$ -	\$ 72,900.00
	Florida	Away	Flight	\$ 66,000.00	\$ 10,400.00	-	\$ -	\$ 76,400.00
	Tennessee	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -
	LSU	Away	Flight	\$ 59,900.00	\$ 10,400.00	-	\$ -	\$ 70,300.00
	<b>Totals</b>			\$ 249,150.00	\$ 41,600.00	-	\$ -	\$ 290,750.00

**Figure 13: Worst case scenario for Auburn in the East**

EAST	Auburn University (Worst Case)						
	Conference Games	Home/Away	Flight/Drive	Flight Costs	Drive: Round Trip (+ Hotel)	Bus Miles Driven	Drive: Per Mile Cost (+ Hotel)
	Georgia	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -
	South Carolina	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	2,552.0	\$ 11,025.20
	Tennessee	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -
	Kentucky	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	3,872.0	\$ 16,107.20
	Vanderbilt	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -
	Florida	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	2,488.0	\$ 10,778.80
	Texas A&M	Away	Flight	\$ 58,380.00	\$ 10,400.00	2,544.0	\$ 10,994.40
	Alabama	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -
	<b>Totals</b>			<b>\$ 58,380.00</b>	<b>\$ 41,600.00</b>	<b>11,456.0</b>	<b>\$ 48,905.60</b>
							<b>\$ 107,285.60</b>

**Figure 14: Worst case scenario for Auburn in the West**

WEST	Auburn University (Worst Case)						
	Conference Games	Home/Away	Flight/Drive	Flight Costs	Drive: Round Trip (+ Hotel)	Bus Miles Driven	Drive: Per Mile Cost (+ Hotel)
	Miss State	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -
	LSU	Away	Flight	\$ 49,000.00	\$ 10,400.00	-	\$ -
	Arkansas	Away	Flight	\$ 56,000.00	\$ 10,400.00	-	\$ -
	Ole Miss	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -
	Kentucky	Away	Drive	\$ -	\$ 10,400.00	3,872.0	\$ 16,107.20
	Texas A&M	Away	Flight	\$ 58,380.00	\$ 10,400.00	-	\$ -
	Georgia	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -
	Alabama	Home	N/A	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -
	<b>Totals</b>			<b>\$ 163,380.00</b>	<b>\$ 41,600.00</b>	<b>3,872.0</b>	<b>\$ 16,107.20</b>
							<b>\$ 210,687.20</b>

**Figure 15: Missouri Cost Savings**

University of Missouri			
	East	West	Cost Savings
	Last Year's Schedule	Auburn Schedule	Difference
Total Cost:	\$ 284,000.00	\$ 113,728.80	\$170,271.20
	<b>Best Case</b>	<b>Best Case</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Total Cost:	\$ 105,432.00	\$ 58,638.40	\$46,793.60
	<b>Worst Case</b>	<b>Worst Case</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Total Cost:	\$ 290,750.00	\$ 119,892.40	\$170,857.60
	<b>Average (5 year)</b>	<b>Average (5 year)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Total Cost:	\$ 71,761.92	\$ 50,338.48	\$21,423.44

**Figure 15: Auburn Cost Savings**

<b>Auburn University</b>			
	<b>West</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>Cost Savings</b>
	<b>Last Year's Schedule</b>	<b>Missouri Schedule</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Total Cost:	\$ 43,087.60	\$ 105,687.20	-\$62,599.60
	<b>Best Case</b>	<b>Best Case</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Total Cost:	\$ 41,600.00	\$ 41,600.00	\$0.00
	<b>Worst Case</b>	<b>Worst Case</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Total Cost:	\$ 210,687.20	\$ 107,285.60	\$103,401.60
	<b>Average (5 year)</b>	<b>Average (5 Year)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Total Cost:	\$ 106,849.28	\$ 50,338.48	\$56,510.80

Just for clarification, the Flat Rate is calculated by multiplying the \$1,050 per day bus fee by two to get the cost of a round trip to get \$2,100. Then, the cost of a round trip is multiplied by four to accommodate for the four cars (\$8,400), and finally the total cost of four cars is added to the fixed cost of the 8 hotel rooms (10,400). The per mile rate was found by multiplying the total distance traveled round trip by \$3.85. Further, the totals on the far right have an “if” statement from excel, meaning that the higher cost between the Drive: Round Trip Plus Hotel (Flat Rate) and the Drive: Per Mile plus hotel is chosen and added into the total.

The comparison of cost if the teams exchanged schedules was calculate to see if the teams would have benefitted immediately. Whether the teams were playing home or away, could not be altered, but the analysis shows that Missouri would have hypothetically saved \$170,271.70 in their first year in transportation costs. However, Auburn would have hypothetically lost \$(62,599.60). The loss by Auburn was due to the fact that Auburn was essentially in their best case scenario season in the West during 2012. For example, Auburn in 2012 could drive to all of its locations. Additionally, Auburn’s inter-divisional game was against the second closest SEC East division team to them, Vanderbilt. In their best case scenario Auburn would be able to drive to all of their locations as well as their closest inter-divisional opponent, Georgia. The small difference was that Georgia is so close that the flat rate charge applied, and the drive to Vanderbilt was only just above that number. This will be explained further in the best and worst case scenario part of my analysis.

To find Missouri’s best case scenario, all home games were against their opponents that were furthest away, and their closest opponents were away games. The identical notion was followed when choosing the inter-divisional games. This allowed for shorter overall travel. The entire process was duplicated for Auburn. For example, with the scenario of Missouri in the West division, they would play Arkansas, Ole Miss, and Mississippi as away games so that they could drive to all of the locations. In the same scenario Missouri would play home games against opponents that were the farthest away, thus possibly breaking the “7 hour rule”, (A&M, LSU,

and Alabama). The analysis shows that Missouri would save \$46,793.60 by switching to the West in their best case scenario and Auburn would break even.

To find the worst case scenario, the strategy was completely flipped around from the best case. Missouri and Auburn would play their closest opponents at home and furthest away. What was found was that Missouri would save \$56,925.00 by switching to the West and Auburn would save \$103,401.60 by switching to the East.

In the best case scenario, when either are traveling at their cheapest, both Missouri and Auburn collectively still saved approximately \$46,793.60. Moreover, in the worst case scenario of switching divisions, when both schools are traveling at their most expensive, both Missouri and Auburn collectively saved approximately \$160,326.80, or \$170,857.60 and \$103,401.60.

To increase the sample size for more a more accurate assessment, an average of costs using the past 5 years worth of schedules was created. In the case of Missouri, the University of Georgia's schedule was used to simulate what it would be like for Missouri in the east. Georgia's inter-divisional rival is Auburn and so that game could be kept on the schedule as the other cross-divisional rival. These schedules would be before Missouri was in the conference, and at that time there were three cross-conference games. Therefore, Missouri's name was switched on Georgia's schedule to Missouri, the Auburn game would be kept, and the extra cross-divisional rival was switched with the missing divisional game.

Auburn's schedules were used to calculate their own average costs for the past five years, and used the same schedules for Missouri's 5 year history in the SEC West division because Missouri doesn't have history in either division. The findings were that the University of Missouri had a average savings of \$21,423.44, and Auburn had a average savings of \$56,510.80.

If those cost savings from transportation aren't reason enough to Move Missouri to the SEC West and Auburn to the SEC East; how do those savings compare to the reasoning behind why Mike Slive wanted to change the SEC?

### **Best of Both Worlds:**

We discussed earlier that Mike Slive was unable to part with the idea of getting rid of the Iron Bowl, but he doesn't have to. Every team in the SEC plays one permanent inter-divisional game, and another that rotates. For example, Auburn's permanent inter-divisional rival now is Georgia, and it will rotate between all of the other SEC East teams for its other inter-divisional game. So, my suggestion is that after Auburn moves to the SEC East, it should use Alabama as its permanent inter-divisional rival. The only downside to doing this is that Tennessee, Alabama's current permanent rival, would nearly disappear. The question then becomes, how detrimental to Tennessee would this be?

Not even including transportation costs, if Missouri was to essentially switch spots with Auburn, Auburn would be able to annually play powerhouse programs with rich football history like them self. They would play Georgia, their closest cross-border school, Tennessee, an enormous football recruiting rival, South Carolina, a team that Auburn played in the SEC Championship in 2010, and Florida, a team that has won two national championships in the last five years! Moreover, Missouri in the SEC West will give them an opportunity to establish a strong rivalry with their cross-border school, the University of Arkansas. In addition to the rivalry, by playing the SEC West Missouri will gain access to college football's second largest recruiting pool in Texas. By annually playing against Texas A&M, Missouri will have more exposure to the state and its prospects. Although the same could be said of Florida if Missouri stayed in the East, the geographic location of Missouri to Texas as opposed to Missouri to



Florida becomes an enormous problem for 18 year-old prospects that want to stay next to home. That being said if Missouri builds a better team through stronger recruiting, they will begin to make bowl games which serves as additional revenue for all SEC programs.

Another possibility of Slive to consider is that if the loss of the Tennessee-Alabama rivalry is so detrimental to the fans, he could suggest that both teams schedule each other as non-conference opponents instead of the smaller institutions that SEC teams tend to schedule. Finally, if you consider all of these potential benefits paired with the transportation cost savings, you will see the enormous potential for profit gains; therefore justifying the move.

**Final Comments:**

College football is a business, and a very successful one at that. Commissioner Slive is charged with the responsibility to uphold and bring value to the reputation of the conference while still maintaining the bottom line. Both The University of Missouri as well as the Auburn University saw clear cost savings. After comparing best-case, worst-case, and even increasing sample size to find an average, the cost savings were still apparent. Therefore, the cost savings by both schools, paired the mutually beneficial exchange by both Auburn and Missouri to the opposite division, the potential in-tangible benefit, all while being able to save the Iron bowl proves that moving the Missouri to the SEC West and Auburn to the SEC East should be done. With this information, Commissioner Slive would more than ample reason to propose making the change to the other members of the Southeastern Conference Board of Directors, and make this proposal come to fruition.



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